

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Hackney's **OTHER** Newspaper

GENERAL ELECTION

GATHERING GLOOM OVER HACKNEY

You ain't seen nothing yet! The Tory attack on the people of Hackney over the last four years is as nothing compared with their plans for the next five.

Aside from their onslaught on the unemployed, the health service, trade unions, women and ethnic minorities and on top of their policies on defence, housing, public transport, education and the EEC, the Tories have got plans for local government which would have a devastating effect on Hackney.

They have launched a direct attack on the GLC and other metropolitan councils (actually set up under a Tory government) because they resent the attempts by these councils to increase provisions for the people of their area. This is a deliberate political move against the democratic right of local people to elect whatever form of local government they choose.

Perhaps even more serious are their plans for curtail ing the spending powers of local authorities. These will involve giving themselves the powers to call in the authority before it sets its rate levels and inform it what Government thinks is an 'appropriate' rate for the area.

Rate capping

The process is to be called rate-capping. It sounds more like knee capping and, in the words of Hackney Council leader Anthony Kendall, "It will certainly leave local authorities limping."

The Tory plans for local government were roundly attacked by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. They said: "At the very least, we are seeing plans for a drastic far-reaching centralisation of the government of this country. At its worst, we are seeing something that could deeply damage democratic freedom itself."

The leak of yet another Government paper to the Local Government Chronicle showed how far advanced are the plans for abolishing the GLC and the metropolitan counties. In London, responsibility for housing, highways and parks would be passed to the boroughs.

Tory menace

There would be joint boards for education, fire and waste disposal. The ILEA would remain as a joint board (contrary to earlier Tory plans to abolish it).

If, as seems likely, Ernie Roberts and Brian Sedgmore are elected for the Hackney constituencies on 9 June, they will have their work cut out defending Hackney from the ravages of another round of Thatcherism. Hackney may be what the pundits will call a Labour stronghold but we will need every ounce of strength we can muster to fight the Tory menace.

Above and right: Two of these white, middle class MEN will represent Hackney in the next parliament. No prizes for guessing who.



SEARCHLIGHT ON WHITE

Ray White, whose membership of the Liberal Party has at last been revoked, now has definitely been proved to have NF connections. Searchlight has been researching into his past and come up with certain facts on his activities, including evidence such as the picture above, of White with the NF honour guard in Wood Green in 1977.

No longer can White claim that accusations of his connections with racist circles are all a mistake, caused by the accident of his being linked by marriage to Derek Day.

Not much had been heard of White since 1977, when he was one of a group of racists ejected from a council meeting. Eighteen months ago however he surfaced again, starting a 'vigilante' group on the estate where he lived in North Hackney. His main interest appeared to be in confronting any black youngster who tried to walk through the place, regardless of guilt. After a short time he wore out the patience of his neighbours and of the police. Let us hope the last has now been heard of him.

Nursery workers reply

In last month's issue of HPP an article appeared on the dispute at the Market Nursery over the dismissal of two of the workers there. The following article has been written by the sacked workers to present the case from their point of view.

In early March Janet Pearce and Liz Thomas, two childcare workers, were sacked from the Market nursery. The dispute goes back to last summer when there was considerable disagreement between staff and management. The management committee had tried to impose a co-ordinator against the wishes of the staff, attempted to introduce an extra five unpaid hours to the working week and been unsupportive of the staff while they were working in difficult conditions.

On March 2 staff were summoned to a meeting. None of the management committee would explain the urgency of this meeting but insisted all staff should be present. At the meeting, Janet and Liz were accused of ignoring the boys and being disruptive. There were also allegations of poor road safety with the children. They were asked to resign. When they refused, the committee sacked them on the basis of a vote. No

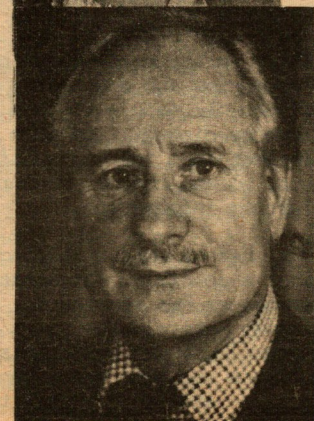


attempt was made to substantiate these allegations at the time.

After union intervention they were reinstated and at once suspended pending the outcome of a disciplinary hearing.

When Janet and Liz asked for written reasons for their dismissal, they were presented with lists of some 27 charges including allegations of indoctrination

Continued on back page



STAN'S OUT

Sound the dirges, pull on the black crepe armbands, ring the mourning bell. This column marks the political obituary of one Stanley Clinton Davis. Sometime MP for the rotten borough of Hackney Central and sleek, smooth smelling solicitor.

Stanley's enforced departure from the Commons has marred his seemingly effortless promotion to the Labour Front Bench. He would surely have been a contender for a Cabinet job in the (unlikely) event of a Labour sweep to power on 9 June. Now, having survived the reselection process in the full glare of a quarter page picture in the Sunday Times, he has been cruelly kneed in the groin by the Boundary Commissioners.

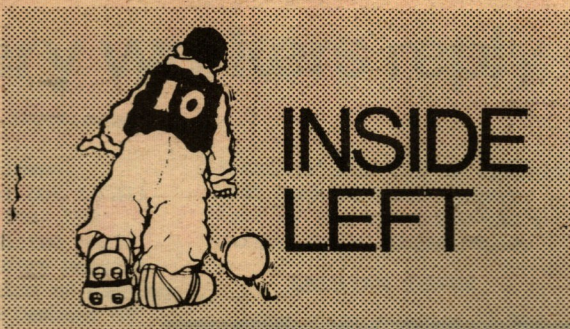
It may be a little difficult

to believe, but back in the 1960s. Stanley had quite a distinguished career as a radical solicitor defending civil liberties. Perhaps his most famous case was that of a man called Donald Room, who was arrested on a demonstration and had half a brick planted on him by a policeman, Det. Sgt. Challenor. This case led to the discovery that Challenor had been in the habit of framing his prisoners. Questions were asked, an enquiry was set up and it was decided that Challenor had been suffering from mental illness. (How could anyone suspect that policemen who were not mentally ill were in the habit of planting evidence on suspects? Perish the thought!) Now of course Clinton Davis has little to do with the law firm in Mare

Street that bears his name. In fact his most celebrated appearance in recent years has been at Old Street Court defending Johnny Kotz when he was arrested for obstruction while on walkabout in a Graham Road anti-lorry protest.

PARTNER

It is somewhat ironic to note here that the chair of Hackney South, where Stanley made his last stand is one Joe Davies (no relation) who is a partner in Clinton Davis and Co.



You could never have accused Stanley of wild-eyed Trotskyism or anything similar in his parliamentary career. In fact he has held to his model, steady-as-you-go, moderation-in-all-things views for so long that it is no surprise that he so nearly reached his elevated status.

This moderation was only achieved by building a solid base of support in his local party. During his struggle to get reselected, it emerged that he was involved in what he called a "small group" with local figures like Bob Masters. This group was

influential in keeping his hold on the Hackney Central seat.

Clinton Davis has also been involved in promoting at least one firm of so-called "venture capitalists", Oak Ventures, who sent out a glossy prospectus soliciting investment.

There is one rosy prospect on the horizon for Stanley to look forward to in his enforced retirement. The spruce Ernie Roberts is now 71 (cries of "he doesn't look it!") and will probably not be running again for Parliament. So there might be a vacancy in Hackney North in 1988. If there's a Labour Party left in 1988, of course. If there's a country left in 1988. Stanley actually got more votes here in the selection meeting than he got in Hackney South. Does this give him a base to work on? Or is it back to pounding the duty solicitor's roster at Old Street Court for the rest of his life? We shall see.

CHANCE FOR A CHANGE

Dear HPP,

Now Thatcher has cut and run before unemployment and inflation figures go even higher, we have a great chance to put right our mistake of 1979. She has brought disaster -- record unemployment, record gifts to the EEC, record drop in living standards, record waste on armaments, record private investment abroad, the lowest level of peacetime housebuilding since 1928, the heaviest tax burden ever imposed, etc.

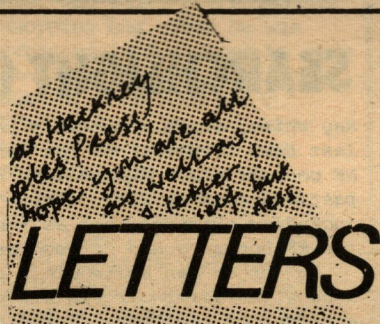
Prices have risen by 51% since 1979, ie 13% per year, compared with 10% in Labour's last year in office. And this failure she cites as her biggest success, justifying all the rest of the destruction!

Thatcher, and her SDP poodles, insist on staying in the EEC: this is of a piece with the rest of her destructive policies. We are the second largest contributor to its budget; last year it cost us £620 million. Our trade deficit in manufactured goods with the EEC rose from 1979 to £5000 million last year, costing us 500,000 manufacturing jobs.

In the 1975 referendum, EEC supporters promised us Jobs for the Boys. Well, Roy Jenkins got his, but the EEC at once ordered a 15% cut in our steel production, costing 22,000 jobs, and it has gone on like that ever since, sacrificing our jobs to prop up the German and French steel industries.

Leaving the EEC will enable the Labour Government to control imports, preventing the import of those manufactured goods which destroy jobs here. It will also let us buy cheaper food on the world market; Tory MP Richard Body estimates that the Common Agricultural Policy cost us £3,000 million last year, by keeping prices artificially high to suit French and British landowners.

Norway, not in the EEC has



used the revenue from its oil to invest in recovery -- so output is up, and unemployment down. Thatcher has sold off our oil to her friends -- one of whom, Colin Phipps, chief executive of Clyde Petroleum and an SDP candidate, said of her privatisation policies "SDP policy is quite clear on this. It would, in general, preserve the status quo." This status quo, of high profits and low investment and mass unemployment, must and will be changed.

Thatcher Out! Labour to win! Fraternally, Will Podmore,

THE ROAD AHEAD

Dear HPP,

My Party, the Communist Party, has consistently advocated that we should be public accountability by London's Police to an elected public authority.

We do so because we believe generally in democratic control and particularly so of those bodies that are charged with responsibility of law and order.

However, we Communists understand that we live in a Capitalist Society where all sections of the state machine are geared to the requirements of Capitalism.

Thus we are not surprised that the police in Hackney appear to be racially biased as racism helps to create divisions among working people. We are not surprised when the police always appear to take the side of the bosses in any industrial dispute.

We are also not surprised when working people are harassed by Specialist Claims Control Teams in respect of the pittance they get whilst the rich tax-evaders get away with millions.

What we in the Communist Party are surprised at is that many class-conscious working people, who understand what is going on, do not join in the struggle to bring about not only reforms of the system producing the abuses, but also the end of the Capitalist system itself and its replacement by a Socialist system of society, where the resources of our community and the skill of our people will be used for the benefit of all and not just for the profit of the few.

In such a society the police force would be biased in favour of working people and in favour of equal treatment for all regardless of race, colour or creed.

The way to such a Socialist society is set out in the Communist Party's Programme, "The British Road to Socialism", and we Communists welcome all who decide to travel this road with us.

Yours fraternally, Harry Mundy,

HPP'S INACCURACIES

Dear HPP,

I'm writing to express criticism of your story on Market Nursery.

There were a great many inaccuracies and misleading statements made -- I hope someone else will be able to correct them for you -- if not, please contact me for further information.

But what is most appalling is that a so-called 'alternative' newspaper can represent almost entirely the views of an employer who has dismissed workers who have union support -- and totally fail to

represent the views of the workers, the union or even the independent observer who was present during the disciplinary hearings.

I hope that your next issue apologises for your presentation of the story and is able to give readers an accurate account of the issues involved.

Yours sincerely, Helen Brown, (Parent of children at Market Nursery)

WE'RE NOT VILLAINS

Dear HPP,

'Nursery in Turmoil' (HPP May '83). Market Nursery hits the headlines again.

It's come as quite a shock to many of us involved in this conflict that our concern for our children has cast us, in the eyes of Janet Pearce, Liz Thomas and their supporters, in the roles of reactionary parents, anti-trade unionists and anti-lesbians. This is particularly hard to swallow when many of us are active socialists, trade unionists, anti-sexists and supporters of gay rights.

Perhaps I should state, before I proceed any further, my interest in this affair. At the time of the dismissals I was Chairperson of the Management Committee (elected by parents and staff) and a member of the disciplinary panel who dismissed Janet Pearce and Liz Thomas. My daughter went to Market Nursery because it had a history and tradition of parent involvement, anti-sexism and anti-racism and provided a secure and stimulating environment for the children.

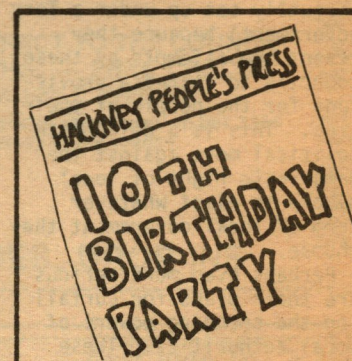
At the end of the day, the responsibility of the Management Committee rests not in its 'ideological correctness', but in ensuring the safety and emotional security of the children in the nursery. Janet Pearce and Liz Thomas were sacked because their standards of

work did not meet with this requirement.

They, and their supporters, have attempted to shift the area of debate away from child-care standards into the arena of anti-lesbianism and anti-trade unionism. Playing on the susceptibility of much of the left to the 'politics of guilt', and to the receptive ear of some of the left press, they have attempted very shrewdly to make the Management Committee look the villain of the piece.

Fortunately, it seems that HPP appreciates the complexity of the issues involved. I hope that your readers will appreciate that the actions of the Management Committee at Market Nursery had nothing to do with anti-lesbianism or anti-trade unionism. I hope that the pages of HPP will now be made available for a positive debate about the problems of community groups including trade unionism and anti-sexism.

Mal Bazant, ex-chair person Market Nursery.



All our friends, readers and supporters are invited to our

TENTH BIRTHDAY PARTY!

at Chats Palace
42 Brooksbys Walk E9
on Thursday 23 June
at 8 pm.

MUSIC from
Dave and the Doughnuts
CABARET from Andy P

ADMISSION FREE!
but a collection will
be taken.



Different positions

LABOUR

Roberts

Hackney North

Sedgemore

Hackney South

Hackney is dying. You can see the signs everywhere. Indeed a recent independent report shows that the Tories, helped by their SDP/Liberal friends and allies, have made Hackney the poorest and most deprived area in London. 18,000 local people are out of work. Factories big and small are closing. Lesney's and Metal Box are just the tip of the iceberg. Hospitals such as St. Leonards are being shut. T.B. is on the increase. In short, Thatcher's Britain is nasty, painful and brutish.

Labour's crash programme to clear away the mess has four main elements -- a bold economic plan to increase prosperity, including 12,000 new jobs for Hackney, withdrawal from the common market, the re-building of our health, education and social services in Hackney and a non-nuclear defence policy to bring about peace.

Locally we're placing great emphasis on creating jobs for young people and we'll be setting up a new student trainee scheme for all 16 and 17 year olds with £25 a week for all those who take part.

Hackney has a high proportion of black people and our new deal for them includes plans for community policing that's fair for all, and a new Nationality Act and immigration rules that are based on human decency rather than on racial prejudice. We certainly don't intend to be intimidated by the two fascist candidates who are standing in the constituency.

Our aim during the campaign will be to unite young and old, black and white, men and women: to bring the community together and to save Hackney from the disgrace of being London's poorest borough.

LIBERAL

Roberts

Hackney South

The central issue in this election is the loss of dignity which successive British governments have inflicted on ordinary people.

The only way to change that is for the Liberal Party to entirely replace Labour as "the people's party".

SDP/LIB

Brown

Hackney South

Ron Brown is standing for the SDP/Liberal Alliance even though he was elected as a Labour MP in 1979. According to his agent: "His ideals, and careful personal attention to his constituents' problems have not changed but the Labour Party has."

"In recent years Labour has been hijacked by the slow infiltration of Leftist and Marxist fringe movements, whose attitudes about extra-parliamentary activity are unacceptable in a parliamentary democracy. The left have taken over Labour with a campaign of hatred and abuse against those members holding the high ideals of a moderate,

We regard property rights as quite crucial in the workplace. The only way to solve the bitter struggle between capitalism and Trade Unions is to give workers as a right shares in the companies they work for. That is the only way you can break down a century of class based politics.

We fought against the Labour in Shoreditch for a number of years. We built up support amongst local people because we kept coming round even when there was no election. We feel that today people trust us. We would throw away that trust if we were to stand down for a person who was in the Labour Party for 45 years.

In our view Ron Brown is still a Labour Party candidate and his biggest concern will be to save his deposit.

caring and compassionate society."

"It is now the Social Democratic Party that is the custodian of these values."

Brown's campaign is borrowing heavily from the community-oriented rhetoric of the Liberal Party: "He lives in the constituency and knows the community intimately through working with his regular weekly Advice Service-- Bad housing conditions-- a Labour Council that does not repair its housing -- that will not allow tenants to transfer -- bad roads and pavements -- overcrowding."

The Alliance in South Hackney is in disarray due to Jeff Roberts' decision to run as the official Liberal candidate.

ECOLOGY

Fitzpatrick

Hackney North

We are the only Party having an unequivocal stance on unilateral nuclear disarmament, on withdrawal from NATO and the EEC, on abolishing the arms trade and in renouncing Nuclear Power.

I am the only candidate accredited by Friends of the Earth and represent the only party with an honest yet radical approach both to unemployment and to Minority Rights. Even with the bias evident in all of our national press, the Ecology Election Manifesto was hailed as offering "the only realistic -- if idealistic -- solution both to British

and World problems." Our stance on third world issues is clear, and presents a real possibility of breaking out of the 'we will buy your coffee if you buy our bombs (at our prices)' syndrome to develop genuine greater self-reliance.

A vote for any other party is really a wasted vote; only the Ecological Party has an internal representation system that is totally democratic and reflects its grass roots.

We cannot renege on our manifesto promises! To vote for the Ecology Party means to vote for a far more fulfilling life style, in a safer, better world. People everywhere are realising this. It is the first time that the people of Hackney will have the choice to vote Ecology.

Jobs and the economy
Only the Communist Party proposes socialist economic measures to deal with the economic catastrophe. Communist policy is for a major extension of public ownership accompanied by compulsory planning agreements in remaining privately owned firms. In particular major multi-nationals and financial institutions would be nationalised.

On low pay, crucially important in Hackney, Labour proposes discussions with the TUC. The Communist Party proposes a national minimum wage of £90 per week and free collective bargaining to improve on that figure. Labour unfortunately, wishes to return to the disastrous social contract, this time called the national economic assessment.

There is no possibility of a Tory, Liberal or SDP candidate being elected in either Hackney seat. Labour goes into the election with 10,000 plus majorities in both constituencies. The Liberal "fracas" in

NAMIBIA

A CENTURY OF STRUGGLE!

**ASSEMBLY HALL SATURDAY
HACKNEY TOWN HALL JUNE 18
MARE STREET E8 7-30pm**

SPEAKERS

ERNIE ROBERTS (CHAIR)
SWAPO (SOUTH WEST AFRICA PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION)
ANC (AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA)
CLLR SAM SPRINGER, EX-HACKNEY MAYOR
CLLR ANTHONY KENDALL, LEADER HACKNEY COUNCIL

MUSIC

FREEDOM SONGS FROM JAMES PHILLIPS
REGGAE FROM KINGSLAND SCHOOL STEEL BAND

organised by NAMIBIA SUPPORT COMMITTEE
HACKNEY ANTI-APATHEID GROUP

Advertisement

LIB/SDP

Ash

Hackney North

Our main issue is the rotten two party system; the Alliance offers an alternative.

The Labour Party have made a great cock up -- for example if you look at the number of empty council flats. They try to blame Mrs Thatcher but the root of the problem lies in the corrupt and rotten way they have run the borough.

If elected the SDP/Liberal Alliance would spend more on housing and to help those most in need. We would change the social security system instead of just oiling it as the Labour Party proposes.

One of the problems of the borough has been the decline of shopping facilities and small business opportunities. If elected we would cut business rates by 10% and offer help to small businesses.

There is an unfortunate situation in South Hackney where Ron Brown as a sitting SDP MP is standing as official SDP candidate and Jeff Roberts is standing as the official Liberal. But up north, we're working together.

WRP

Goldstein

Hackney South

The WRP don't separate local issues from national ones. Of course Hackney is one of the worst affected areas by the crisis of British capitalism-- it can be seen in mass unemployment and health service cuts.

North Hackney, the fact that the SDP and Liberals are both standing in South Hackney and the adoption of Tory unknowns just 3 weeks before polling day in both constituencies turn certainty into cast iron, certain, certainty.

Every Communist vote is the clearest possible vote against the Thatcher government and for positive, democratic socialist policies. A big Communist vote will strengthen the entire left in Hackney.

TORY

Booth

Hackney North

Croft

Hackney South

There may yet be a few souls in Hackney who may be tempted to vote for the Tory candidates -- though after four years of Thatcherism it is difficult to see why. It is noticeable that local Conservatives are never selected to fight the Hackney seats in its candidates a few weeks before the election and then spirits them off elsewhere to fight next time in a safe Home Counties seat. Readers with long memories will recall that the Tory candidate in 1974 in Hackney South was none other than the man who is now the loony-right MP for Basildon, Harvey Proctor.

Perhaps the final word should go to Joe Lobenstein, in his message to the voters printed on the Tory election leaflet. "The main danger facing Great Britain today is that it will become dominated by the extremes of the political spectrum." With a new government led by Thatcher, Tebbit, Howe and Joseph this would seem to be a distinct possibility.

We oppose the Communist and Labour parties who have betrayed the working classes by compromising their principles. For example the Communist Party have gone along with the decision to ban political slogans -- like "Maggie Out" from the Peoples March for Jobs.

Both parties have also participated with the TUC in the MSC's Youth Training Scheme. It's being used as a source of cheap labour to create a scab army to destroy the Trade Union movement. If youth are to have a future they need proper jobs, not phoney jobs. We support independent youth training.

We feel vindicated in standing when you look at the sabotage of labour leaders like Healy and Callaghan. Only real revolutionary socialist policies can defend the rights and standards of the working classes.

COMMUNIST

Goldman

Hackney North

Green

Hackney South

The Communist Party's election campaign is sharply anti-Tory. We are being very warmly received on the doorsteps in Hackney, especially by those people who have suffered most under Thatcher.

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY FOR DISARMAMENT MAY 24th HACKNEY WOMEN MAKE CONNECTIONS

£45 million per year spent on civil defence.
96 cruise missiles scheduled for Greenham Common = 1,440 the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb

Women sung, danced and encircled Stoke Newington Town Hall and the bunter was open to us. Wasn't it small! No places for us.

Photos: Maggie Murray, Format

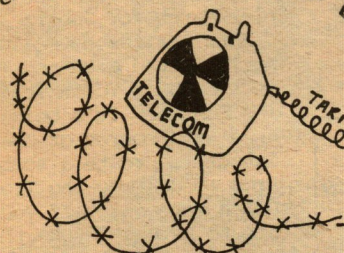
Dalston and Stamford Hill shopping centres
Women need this money for food.

£18 per household per week ON WEAPONS

£25 per household per YEAR ON HOSPITALS

TRIDENT

Women on their streets, at work in health centres, schools and nurseries made the connections



Why a woman's day of action?

Nuclear war and the money spent on weapons affect us all - old, young, black, white; women and men. Only a few - in big business - have anything to gain. It's for all of us in our different ways to show our opposition.

Women have always had to struggle - debased economic and decision making power,

we have for too long been kept isolated from each other. Women together are now showing imaginative, direct and non-violent ways of protest against the aggression and weaponry of male dominated societies.

The peace camp at Greenham has had a major impact on public awareness. Being

a women-only camp, away from traditional roles and hierarchies, new ideas have been able to grow.

Women's actions in Hackney on May 24 showed this same imagination and energy coming from women working together in local groups. Many previously inactive women have been encouraged

to step forward by this new approach to political action.

You don't have to go to Greenham to be a Greenham woman, but women at the camp invite all women to a Full Moon in June Dragon Feast on 25 June. Also a linking arms blockade 4-9 July. Contact for Hackney Greenham group: Jo 985 0241 Heather 254 9130

THE UNION CONNECTION

Cathy Sutherland, of Hackney Nalco Women's Group and a CND member, gives her own view on the day's events.

May 24 was a day of women's action. All over Britain there were hundreds of rallies, demos and pickets. Across the world the number of events must have run into thousands. And all of them were organised and attended by women.

In Hackney alone there were at least nine events, followed in the evening by a gathering in Trafalgar Square, when many women complained of rough and heavy-handed policing.

Women's action

It was great to see women organising political activities and taking the lead. In the anti-nuclear movement we have proved that we can struggle as energetically as men. Thousands of people have been inspired to demonstrate for the first time.

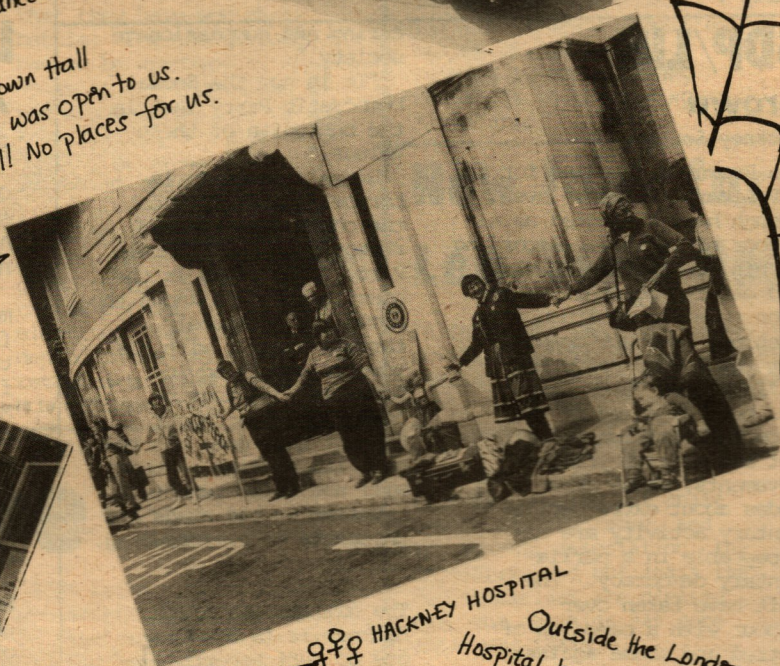
The achievement of the Greenham Common women is remarkable: they have moved the anti-nuclear movement forward significantly. CND in the '80s is less militant than it was in the 60s and people were worried that it was losing its impetus. Enthusiasm does not last for ever if all that is on offer is the odd demo. Peace camps however introduced direct action: the idea that the state can be opposed by physical force. Many people have long had this idea, but it was the Greenham Common women who gained the idea mass acceptance. They have also made millions of people see the political role of the police and courts, and they have sparked off a much wider women's anti-war movement.

I personally think that although this has been a tremendous contribution to the anti-nuclear and women's movements, the nuclear debate is in fact as much a men's issue as a woman's. After all, men and boys will also get blown up and burned in a nuclear war.

Class issue

I think that the nuclear escalation is a class issue. In Russia the state is spending more and more on arms while the economy stagnates and living standards fall. In the west governments increase arms spending because they are forced to serve the interests of big business, not those of the electorate.

The reasons are complicated but one thing is clear - governments will only disarm if forced to by a mass disruption of the economy. The power to do that lies with the working class. It needs to take united action and refuse to do work connected with nuclear weapons. This is at present a long way off, but the anti-nuclear movement should start trying to build up support for these ideas among the unions now.



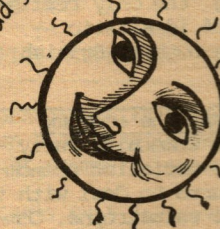
98% HACKNEY HOSPITAL
Outside the London Hospital, hospital workers, women and passers by played "Let's use the world's resources AS WE CHOOSE"

Welfare not Warfare!

ST LEONARDS STAYS!

Trade union, international and local connections made. ♀ in trade unions rally at Hackney Town Hall.

Women had fun and gained energy working together and it didn't rain all day





Stamford Hill Bus Garage T&GWU branch members hand over a cheque for £50 for the Hackney Centre for the Unemployed to Paula Moseley and Ian Lambert, co-ordinator of the Hackney Centre for the Unemployed.

ON THE ROAD

Paula Moseley, Hackney's representative on the People's March for Jobs 1983, writes:

Stoke on Trent, 18 May.

"North Wales, Liverpool and Manchester are behind and we are now in the Midlands—260 strong after our Wales feeder march merged with the contingent from Glasgow.

The welcome we receive is getting better and better the further south we get. People wave and wish us luck, leaving their shops, factories, schools etc. I've slept in schools, youth clubs, civic halls, county halls, churches and tonight, on a squash court.

Sometimes we stay in people's houses, very hospitable they are too.

Occasionally we meet a wally who gets abusive, brainwashed by the propaganda put out against us by HM Government. This is no picnic, no holiday. It's hard work and 5 million out of work is no joke.

Today I did an interview for the BBC World Service, last week I did one for East German TV.

Baths and/or showers are laid on for us and the food is generally good.

Yesterday we did 22 miles, today 20. My feet hurt and I get tired but still I walk every step of the way (except Sunday morning). NALGO support us well, today there was a hot air balloon in our honour and a bus follows us from time to time.

We had an impressive support

march leaving Manchester and when West Midlands joined us yesterday. I'm South East Steward. There's a disco tonight but I'm on security; I'm beat anyway.

Peoples march for jobs

'83

We picked up a donation from Rolls Royce workers at Crewe and they've pledged to be in London's Battersea Park on 5th June for the huge rally there. See you then.

Best wishes,
Paula.

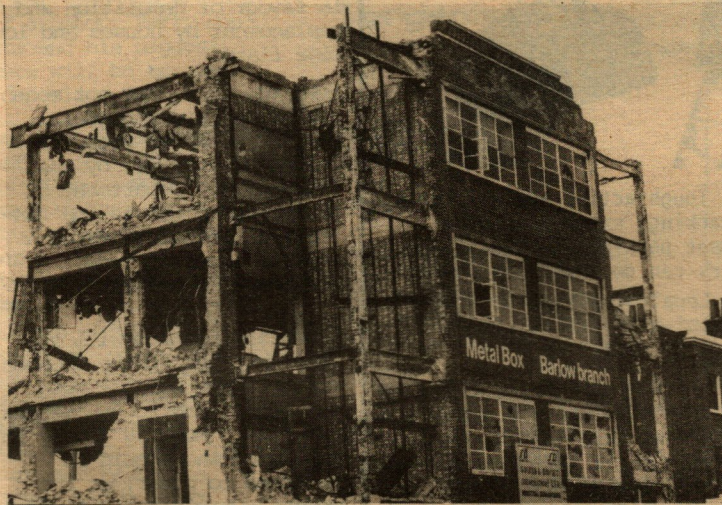
Paula, 18, has been unemployed since she left college last year. She lives in Hackney Wick and has been active in local housing campaigns and at the Hackney Centre for the Unemployed. She was nominated for the march by the Centre and has been sponsored by the Hackney Trades Council, NALGO Metropolitan Region and local unions including the T&GWU (see photo). Paula wants to be a Housing Rights Worker.

Workers victory at Metal Box

While the bulldozers moved in to demolish the closed Metal Box factory in Lower Clapton workers at the Upper Clapton factory won a two year promise that their factory would not be closed. This happened after a two week strike against the day-work only routine that management had imposed as part of a "rationalisation" programme.

So the future of the site (now Hackney's only large factory) is assured for the short term, even though many

After prolonged negotiations between the Transport and General Workers Union and Metal Box, agreement was reached. Everyone who has been moved from shift to day-work will get £400. A formula has been worked out for a 12 month contract on day-work, so no one can be arbitrarily moved out onto shifts. If there are any redundancies in the future, redundancy pay will be calculated including the appropriate shift premium. Twenty setter will get



people have been attracted by the carrot of redundancy pay which was dangled before them.

The rationalisation programme called for several hundred job losses at the Palmers Green and Upper Clapton sites. For a time there were many fears that the Clapton factory might be rationalised out of existence. There was little initial response among the workforce for a fight-back against closure. Arguments about selling jobs which belong to the community may make sense, but with up to £10,000 being offered in redundancy payments the temptation is obvious. Altogether, about 180 jobs are to go at Clapton, and 110 in Palmers Green. Here the situation was such that the workers were actually arguing over who was going to get the redundancy payments.

The strike over day-work only routines at Clapton was for a £500 payment to cover loss of shift allowances.

a further £300, to cover the loss of a shift meal break. The proposal to change manning levels has been abandoned by management.

Jim Wills, the T&GWU chair of the Strike Committee, said "What won this strike was the fact that everyone stuck together. We went out 100% solid and that's how we're going back. Our members worked really hard to bring the strike to a successful conclusion. We maintained a 24 hour picket and visited other unions and workplaces to build solidarity."

Hackney link to Turks under death threat

The Turkish town of Fatsa, on the Black Sea coast, has been 'adopted' by Hackney Councillors.

This step has been taken as a mark of support for 261 of the local inhabitants currently facing the death penalty in what is Turkey's largest recent mass trial. Over 500 other townspeople, who have been arrested by the military authorities for forming a socialist administration in the town, are also facing trial.

The socialist administration was set up after municipal elections in 1979 when a socialist mayor was returned, Fikri Sonmez. A series of democratic reforms was sparked off, including increased wages, new house building and cheaper public transport - measures which met with hostility from the Turkish ruling circles and eventually led to a local curfew, a witch hunt of left wingers and finally the arrests.

Hackney Councillors intend to give the defendants and the 25,000 other people of Fatsa as much publicity as possible. They will also send observers to the trial.

The step was taken because of the large Turkish population of Hackney. The Council leader, Anthony Kendall, explained the Turkish Solidarity Campaign had approached the Council in January asking for support. He hopes that the backing being given to the people of Fatsa will, even if only in a small way, help them to gain their democratic rights.

100 years of fight

On Saturday 18 June, Hackney people will be able to join supporters of the South West Africa Peoples Organisation in a meeting to mark a century of struggle for freedom in Namibia. One hundred years ago, the Imperial German Army began its colonisation of Namibia with a campaign aimed at the extermination of the local population. This month the spectre of genocide again raised its head. The independent Namibia newspaper, the Windhoek Observer, investigating stories of killings in the north of the country, reported the discovery of mass graves. Before it could

release its evidence, South African security police raided its offices and confiscated all relevant documents and photographs.

The meeting at 7.30pm at Hackney Town Hall, will be an opportunity for the people of Hackney to express their support for SWAPO's struggle for freedom. Speakers will include SWAPO and African National Congress representatives, local councillors Sam Springer and Anthony Kendall and Ernie Roberts MP, with reggae music from Kingsland School Steel Band and freedom songs from James Phillips.

During the afternoon,

runners from 14 Hackney organisations will carry a SWAPO freedom torch and a message from Hackney Town Hall to the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square. Signed by the Mayor and representatives of the organisations, the message will demand an end to South African brutality and free and fair elections in Namibia. It will denounce British Government complicity in the oppression of the Namibian people. There will be a picket of the South African embassy at 5.30 pm.



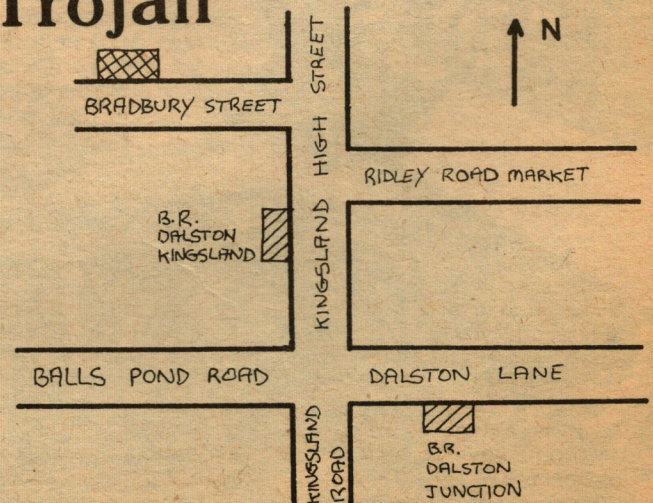
Trojan

Printing
Posters
Badgemaking
By appointment to the people of Hackney.

has moved!

10a Bradbury Street, N16.
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Trojan



RUBBISH

Community groups and the unions have now come together to press the Council to improve the cleansing service in the borough. If the campaign succeeds, it would mean that the workers would have more job security and better wages for doing an unpleasant task. It would also result in the cleansing department having more resources - better facilities for the public and better equipment for the workers.

Priorities

The campaign is asking for:

- More money for litter bins reliable dust carts and better equipment.
- More street sweepers and a borough wide daily sweeping service.
- More mechanical brooms to sweep and wash the main streets and markets daily.
- Reliable vehicles, tested by the workers.
- Efficient repair and maintenance workshops to keep the dust carts on the roads and prevent unnecessary breakdowns.
- A regular council-run skip service for household rubbish available throughout the borough.

- More street sweepers and a borough-wide daily sweeping service.
- Better co-ordination of the sweepers and the dust-carts.
- Better organisation of the resources for cleansing; the workers and the equipment.
- Tough action against dumpers and businesses which do not register for trade collections.



- Tough action against car parking, especially pavement parking, so the sweepers can do their job properly.
- Local people to put their rubbish in proper bins and not to dump.

"A Brighter Borough: Workers and the Community - a Joint Campaign for Hackney" is published by Hackney Community Action and Hackney Trade Union Support Unit.

FALLING DAMP

The future of Hackney Wick's Trowbridge estate is still uncertain, despite the announcement of plans to demolish the damp-ridden high rise estate.

The 700 or so residents on the estate, which as transferred from the GLC to Hackney last year, have suffered from water penetration and condensation for much of the estate's fifteen year existence.

The tenants and the Council have now succeeded in persuading the GLC to abandon their proposed remedial work which would have been expensive (with no guarantee of success) in favour of demolition and replacement by houses and low rise flats.

However, this does not mean that they have won their battle! For the proposal has to be approved by the folks at the Department of Environment, who as one tenant pointed out rejected a similar proposal from Southwark Council.

A meeting planned with the tenants prior to the proposal going to the DoE has been called off due to the general election. Much is likely to depend on who should be returned to power; at the moment "everything is fluid."

No Wine Bar in the White House

What should happen to the White House in Springfield Park? That is the question that many local residents are asking after it was discovered that plans were afoot to turn the building into a trendy wine bar and restaurant.

The building currently houses a cafe on the ground floor, with offices for the parks department upstairs. The house was originally given by Lord Amhurst to the people of Hackney, with terms attached to the gift that certainly do not stretch to a commercial wine bar operation. The plans for this nearly went through the Council's Leisure Services Committee before the news broke, causing an uproar among residents in the Springfield area.

Many pensioners in particular were angry about the proposal. They wanted the house to continue to offer the cheap cafe facilities that they can use. It has also been suggested that the building could be used for children, as well as providing meeting rooms. A petition against the wine bar plan has now been organised, which calls for the building to become a community centre.

Now that residents have forced the Council officers to consult them, an open meeting has been called for Monday 13 June, at 7.30pm at Harrington Hill School, in Springfield. For more details, contact the Springfield Project on 806 9617.

New look for Lea View House

In spite of competition from private building firms, Hackney's Direct Labour Organisation has won the tender for phase two of the Lea View House modernisation programme. The DLO are already carrying out phase one of the programme, and the tenants association, the architects and not least the DLO themselves are pleased that the decision has gone their way again.

The conversion work - devised after an imaginative exercise in involving the tenants in deciding what kind of modernisation they wanted - creates two and three storey maisonettes for families, lifts to serve the smaller families on the upper floors and special sheltered accommodation for the elderly.

Not everything has gone as smoothly as might have been hoped. The first block, on a rolling programme, should have been ready for re-occupation in December last year. It now looks as though it won't be ready until July. If the other phases run to a similar timescale (six months behind on a nine month schedule) then



the programme could take, as one person remarked, ten years.

Other problems have arisen also. Promised top floor balconies have been abandoned and some of the new flats will be no larger than before which means no separate toilet and no storage space - in short, a failure to meet modern building standards.

There may be time yet to sort out some of these difficulties. HPP will continue to take a keen interest in developments.

O'Brien's Grave

A number of different leads have brought the 'discovery' this month of the grave of the famous Chartist journalist and organiser James Bronterre O'Brien in Stoke Newington's Abney Park Cemetery. (Readers may recall that O'Brien was mentioned in Sheila Rowbotham's article in last month's issue about the radical history of Hackney.)

Hackney Councillor Gery Lawless has said that earlier in the year the Council Labour Group agreed to "locate identify and renovate" the grave, and now the grave has been firmly identified, clearing work has already begun.

Bronterre O'Brien was one of the most energetic and campaigning of the Chartists, and certainly one of the best known. He was born in Ireland, took a degree at Dublin University and came to

London to study law at Grays Inn in Clerkenwell. In London he met and became friendly with Henry Hunt ("Orator" Hunt of Peterloo fame) and the journalist William Cobbett.

In 1831 during the great era of the "battle of the unstamped press", O'Brien edited Henry Hetherington's "Poor Man's Guardian", then one of the most popular radical newspapers, and the one that featured the famous logo of the hand-press surmounted by the slogan "Knowledge is Power". Incidentally, this logo was to be found reproduced on a number of the early Centerprise publications - there's historical continuity for you.

Amongst the Chartists he was nicknamed "the schoolmaster" on the basis of his wide reading and erudition. In the debates in the 1830s and

1840s between those Chartists who advocated the necessity of insurrection to secure justice (physical force Chartism) and those who advocated education and electoral means (moral force Chartism) O'Brien belonged to the former camp.

In 1840 he was imprisoned for 18 months for "sedition speaking" at a meeting in Liverpool. After the demise of the Chartist movement in 1848 he lived by lecturing at the John Street Institute and the Eclectic Institute in Denmark Street, Soho. He was an early advocate of land nationalisation and his followers, the O'Brienites, as they were known, were active after his death in the socialist revival of the 1870s which had its origins in the radical club culture of Soho, where Marx came to live, as did many other European refugee socialists.

It's an exciting discovery for Hackney's radical history, though there does seem to be some confusion about his birthdate. The Dictionary of National Biography says that O'Brien was born in 1805, yet the gravestone says that he died in 1864 aged 67, making his birth-year 1797. His epitaph is rather sad, possibly occasioned by the fact that his last years were spent in relative poverty:

James Bronterre O'Brien
Departed this life
December 23rd
1864

Aged 67
His life was grand
His death was sad and drear

KEN WORPOLE



Bronterre O'Brien's grave in Stoke Newington Cemetery

pic: Ian Priddy

ADVERTISEMENT

COMMUNITY ACCOUNTANCY PROJECT

A second community accountant/book-keeper is wanted, to pass on book-keeping and financial skills and deal with needs of community groups in Hackney.

Applicants must have experience of working with community groups and co-ops.

Salary: S01 pt.34 - £10,638 incl. LW.

Job description and application form from Community Accountancy Project, 34 Dalston Lane, London E8 3AZ
Tel: 249 7109

C.A.P. is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from job sharers.

Closing date: 17 June 1983.

pub of the month

Following last month's visit to Campbell's in Hoxton, your roving reporter crawled out to the mid west, otherwise known as Homerton. The Welsh Harp in Homerton Row, E9 is the place. An excellent little pub this, which I first discovered when taking a short cut towards Lower Clapton from Chats Palace.

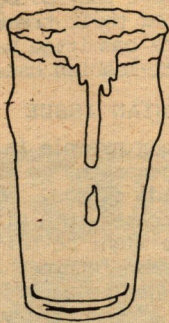
Recognising the shepherd's crook sign of the Kent brewers, Shepherd Neame - a rare sight in this area - I had to take a grip on myself and tot up my consumption at Chats before convincing myself that this was no mirage!

More of Shepherd Neame later - now for the pub. . . .

A smallish one-bar establishment, the Welsh Harp is run by Pat and Winky, who when not serving are frequently to be found on the other side of the bar talking to the locals and joining in with the games. Darts is the most popular, but I have also enjoyed a game of shove half-penny - how many other pubs in Hackney have a board? Does anybody know?

Although there is only the one bar the central serving area tends to split the pub up. To the left and around the bar there is a public bar type atmosphere; in front of the bar a more saloon type atmosphere prevails; while the less brightly lit right hand side is ideal for a quiet relaxing drink with old friends.

A pint of draught Guinness will cost you 86p. The other beers come from Shepherd Neame, a brewery based in Faversham in Kent and fairly new to this area.



There are none of the nationally known draught lagers served here; instead Hurlimann is available at 86p and although not well known, it is considered by many to be one of the better lagers available in England.

The most popular drink however seems to be their bitter at 70p a pint. A distinctive, highly respected drink this, but one which takes a bit of getting used to; it's a real bitter beer, this one - as you might expect coming up from the hop county. Even I have to admit to forcing down several pints before I acquired the taste, but it is worth it! (Two other recommended Shepherd Neame watering holes in this area are the Duke of Sussex in Goldsmith's Row, E2, and the Railway Tavern, St Jude Street, N16.)

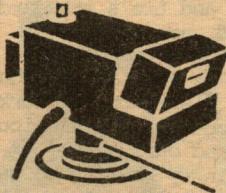
Next month we hope to bring you a 'summerspecial River Lee pub crawl' feature. An open 'research evening' is being planned for Saturday, 18 June, commencing at the Prince of Wales, a Youngs pub by the bridge in Lea Bridge Road, E5, at about 7.30pm. If you would like to join us, please get in touch with HPP to confirm the details. Pic: Ian Priddey

Hackney Video Workshop

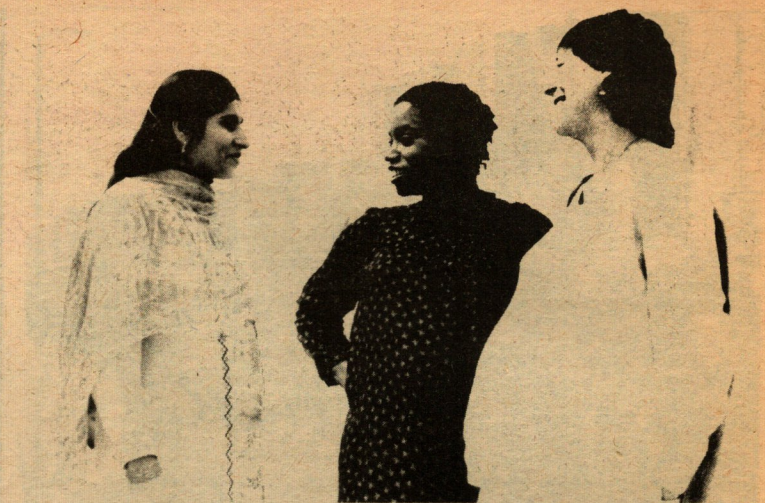
Professional video and multimedia facilities could soon be within reach of Hackney's community groups. This is the declared aim of the newly established Hackney Video Workshop. As a result of current negotiations with local and national bodies, they hope to shortly announce initial financial backing for the project.

While community users will pay little or no charge for the service, others will have to pay a full commercial rate. In this way, the whole operation can eventually become self-financing. With the training courses and professional equipment which will be available as part of the Workshop, community organisations should be able to produce broadcast standard material. All in all, this would mean that the programmes produced would stand a good chance of being broadcast over the national networks and/or through local cable stations. The Workshop members feel that Hackney Council should be fully involved in the project, if it is truly committed to revitalising the borough. Although there already exists a Council-run Media Resources Centre, it is run on a different basis and with more domestic-type equipment.

The Workshop is deeply committed to the policy of not trying to take over programmes and distort what local groups would want to say - in the way that "access" t.v. at present is moulded into an image acceptable to the station that broadcasts it. The Workshop's first project, currently in production and being made on borrowed equipment, is a 'tape on poetry in Hackney. The poets featured in the programme have themselves chosen the images to go with the words'.



"Video is the fastest growing industry in Britain", says the Workshop. Its versatility and simplicity of operation plus its immediacy make it one of the most powerful tools to any community group. Yet it is not being used to its full potential at present. This is simply because the studio and training facilities needed to enable community groups to learn how to produce and edit professional video programmes are not available to them." The next meeting of Hackney Video Workshop is on Monday 14th. June at 6.30 pm in room 7, Homerton Public Library, Homerton High Street E9. Otherwise, further information is obtainable from: David Sheen, 188 Brooke Road, Clapton E5 tel: 986 9249.



Are you pregnant?

REVIEW: "Pregnancy and birth in Hackney and the City of London". Prepared by City and Hackney Community Health Council.

in her hospital notes should she decide against having certain procedures carried out.

The City and Hackney Community Health Council's guide "Pregnancy and birth in Hackney and the City of London" offers a clear and accessible account of maternity services in this area. The emphasis throughout is on informing women of the options available to them, and enabling them to make choices at each stage - from ante-natal care, through choice of place and type of birth, to post-natal procedures. The style of the booklet is direct without being at all condescending, encouraging women to put themselves at the centre of the medical procedures that are involved in preparing for and giving birth. For example, as well as giving information about medical intervention in labour and delivery at the Mothers and Barts hospitals, the book provides a useful sample letter a woman could write for inclusion

All the possibilities besides total hospital care are explored, again with encouragement to exercise the rights to consider a home birth, a G.P. unit delivery, or shared ante-natal care, rather than opting automatically for total hospital supervision and care. If the choice is made for a hospital delivery, the booklet includes a useful section comparing all relevant aspects of the two hospitals, to help in making a decision.

The guide is free to residents of Hackney and the City of London and is available in ante-natal clinics, libraries, and from the Community Health Council (at Shoreditch Health Centre, 210 Kingsland Road E2). It should be required reading early in pregnancy for everyone concerned to retain choice and control before and during the birth of their child.



107 Kingsland High St, E8
Tel: 254 6677

Advertisement

THE RIO JUNE

THU 2 FRI 3 SAT 4		SUN 5 MON 6 TUE 7 WED 8		THU 9 FRI 10 SAT 11		SUN 12 MON 13 TUE 14 WED 15		THU 16 FRI 17 SAT 18		SUN 19 MON 20 TUE 21 WED 22		THU 23 FRI 24 SAT 25 SUN 26 MON 27 TUE 28 WED 29			
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HOW TO GET THERE BY TUBE/RAIL: The cinema is 50 yards from the new DALSTON KINGSLAND Station (BR Cross Town Link Line); there are regular and frequent connec- tions with the tube at Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line) and Stratford (Central Line). OR BR North London Line to DALSTON JUNCTION. OR Tube to Liverpool St. then bus 22, 48, 149, 243. BY BUS: Nos 67, 76, 149, 236, 243 stop outside. Nos 22, 30, 34, 44 & 237 stop at DALSTON JUNCTION.		HOW TO GET THERE BY TUBE/RAIL: The cinema is 50 yards from the new DALSTON KINGSLAND Station (BR Cross Town Link Line); there are regular and frequent connec- tions with the tube at Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line) and Stratford (Central Line). OR BR North London Line to DALSTON JUNCTION. OR Tube to Liverpool St. then bus 22, 48, 149, 243. BY BUS: Nos 67, 76, 149, 236, 243 stop outside. Nos 22, 30, 34, 44 & 237 stop at DALSTON JUNCTION.		HOW TO GET THERE BY TUBE/RAIL: The cinema is 50 yards from the new DALSTON KINGSLAND Station (BR Cross Town Link Line); there are regular and frequent connec- tions with the tube at Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line) and Stratford (Central Line). OR BR North London Line to DALSTON JUNCTION. OR Tube to Liverpool St. then bus 22, 48, 149, 243. BY BUS: Nos 67, 76, 149, 236, 243 stop outside. Nos 22, 30, 34, 44 & 237 stop at DALSTON JUNCTION.		HOW TO GET THERE BY TUBE/RAIL: The cinema is 50 yards from the new DALSTON KINGSLAND Station (BR Cross Town Link Line); there are regular and frequent connec- tions with the tube at Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line) and Stratford (Central Line). OR BR North London Line to DALSTON JUNCTION. OR Tube to Liverpool St. then bus 22, 48, 149, 243. BY BUS: Nos 67, 76, 149, 236, 243 stop outside. Nos 22, 30, 34, 44 & 237 stop at DALSTON JUNCTION.		HOW TO GET THERE BY TUBE/RAIL: The cinema is 50 yards from the new DALSTON KINGSLAND Station (BR Cross Town Link Line); there are regular and frequent connec- tions with the tube at Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line) and Stratford (Central Line). OR BR North London Line to DALSTON JUNCTION. OR Tube to Liverpool St. then bus 22, 48, 149, 243. BY BUS: Nos 67, 76, 149, 236, 243 stop outside. Nos 22, 30, 34, 44 & 237 stop at DALSTON JUNCTION.		HOW TO GET THERE BY TUBE/RAIL: The cinema is 50 yards from the new DALSTON KINGSLAND Station (BR Cross Town Link Line); there are regular and frequent connec- tions with the tube at Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line) and Stratford (Central Line). OR BR North London Line to DALSTON JUNCTION. OR Tube to Liverpool St. then bus 22, 48, 149, 243. BY BUS: Nos 67, 76, 149, 236, 243 stop outside. Nos 22, 30, 34, 44 & 237 stop at DALSTON JUNCTION.		HOW TO GET THERE BY TUBE/RAIL: The cinema is 50 yards from the new DALSTON KINGSLAND Station (BR Cross Town Link Line); there are regular and frequent connec- tions with the tube at Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line) and Stratford (Central Line). OR BR North London Line to DALSTON JUNCTION. OR Tube to Liverpool St. then bus 22, 48, 149, 243. BY BUS: Nos 67, 76, 149, 236, 243 stop outside. Nos 22, 30, 34, 44 & 237 stop at DALSTON JUNCTION.		HOW TO GET THERE BY TUBE/RAIL: The cinema is 50 yards from the new DALSTON KINGSLAND Station (BR Cross Town Link Line); there are regular and frequent connec- tions with the tube at Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line) and Stratford (Central Line). OR BR North London Line to DALSTON JUNCTION. OR Tube to Liverpool St. then bus 22, 48, 149, 243. BY BUS: Nos 67, 76, 149, 236, 243 stop outside. Nos 22, 30, 34, 44 & 237 stop at DALSTON JUNCTION.	

TICKETS: £2.00 (Under 15s, OAPs, UB40s £1.00)



Rough justice

The Stoke Newington and Hackney Defence Campaign has formally protested to the Government about the conduct of "the Judge Jeffries of Highbury" in cases arising out of demonstrations calling for an inquiry into the death of Colin Roach.

In a letter of complaint to the Home Secretary, the Attorney General and the Lord Chancellor, the campaign accused Highbury stipendiary magistrate Michael Johnstone of "consistent hostility and an openly aggressive attitude towards defendants, their witnesses and even their lawyers." Magistrate Johnstone is reported as telling one defence barrister: "I'm not as stupid as you otherwise I wouldn't be hearing this case."

The manner of Johnstone's questions and interruptions has convinced observers that he thinks protestors were in the wrong merely for having taken part in demonstrations. Testifying for the defence in the case of Merville Bishop, who was charged with assaulting a police officer, Lester Lewis of the Roach Family Support Committee explained that stewards on RFSC demos were instructed to get the names of people who were arrested. Johnstone warned that could lead to "trouble". Merville Bishop had been a steward on the March 12th demonstration and was arrested while trying to get the was being arrested. Johnstone sentenced Merville to

one month imprisonment.

In another case Frederick Chitolie testified that he had not been on the march and had been arrested while out shopping. Photographic evidence showed that Frederick was still clutching his shopping bag after he was arrested (and alleged to have assaulted a police officer). However Johnstone found Frederick guilty and sentenced him to prison for more than six weeks on charges of assault, obstruction and threatening behaviour.

Most disturbingly, the Stoke Newington and Hackney Defence Campaign point out that Johnstone has imposed harsher sentences on blacks than on whites. A white defendant was fined £10 for a threatening behaviour conviction, whereas Frederick Chitolie received a 14 day prison sentence.

One piece of good news is that Colin Roach's father, James Roach, was acquitted of obstruction at Highbury Magistrates court at the end of May. Readers may remember our April front page photograph of Mr Roach being manhandled by a crowd of policemen.

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Perhaps this issue of HPP is the first one you've ever seen. Perhaps you've bought the odd copy in the past, but never regularly. Perhaps you are a devoted monthly reader (there are some!).

Whatever you are, did you know that you can help write or produce the next issue? All you have to do is come to our open editorial meeting, which will be held in Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8 at 8pm on WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE.

Nursery workers reply

Continued from front page

with extremist ideas.

A letter went out to all parents saying that the management committee would hold a disciplinary hearing with the intention of sacking the two. Three members of the committee sat on the panel of the hearing, all of whom had previously voted to sack the two. It was hardly surprising that the final decision upheld the sackings as the presenter of the management committee case stated 'this is not an independent hearing'.

There was one independent witness at the hearing - Councillor Denise Robson, then chair of Hackney Council disciplinary sub-committee. In her opinion the final decision was reached without proper regard for the evidence presented by the defendants. In a letter to the committee she expressed concern at the final decision to sack the pair: 'events leading up to the hearing prevented this principle (innocent until proved guilty) from being adhered to in any meaningful way'. She wrote she was 'concerned at your (management committee) reluctance to adopt procedures which... are a safeguard to your employees... It is all too easy to victimise if there aren't any clear rules.'

We would have expected a radical alternative paper to have paid some regard to these criticisms of the committee.

STAFF SUPPORT

The staff support for the committee has been distorted. Three of the 4 permanent staff fully support Janet and Liz and it cannot be ignored that most of the staff supporting the committee's decision are temporaries, covering Janet and Liz's jobs.

The committee's claim that is the two were reinstated 'most' parents would withdraw their children is either rubbish given the urgent need of nursery places or says more about the tactics they used to create confusion than reflect on Janet's and Liz's standards of child care.

The committee may well feel it is not 'anti-union' but its disregard for workers' rights both in the previous months and during the disciplinary hearing shows where it stood on that issue. The issue of lesbianism is not straightforward. Janet and Liz do not claim to have been sacked 'because we are

lesbians' but they do believe that much of their treatment by the committee has a direct anti-lesbian cause.

LESBIAN ISSUE

One clear example is the hysteria generated on the 'bridesmaid' charge. When Janet indicated to a girl that there might be better things in the future than, one has to consider whether the committee would have been so up in arms about it had the statement been made by a heterosexual.

At a more subtle level, Janet and Liz are strong in ways in which lesbians must be in order to survive. Since these are characteristics that heterosexuals often find very threatening, lesbians are frequently accused of being aggressive - exactly the kind of charge being levelled against Janet and Liz. Whether they were 'out' or not at work is

irrelevant to this perception. But the extent that they were not able to be out at the nursery, like all other work places, shows itself to be inherently heterosexist.

Although stating that there is 'no room for prejudice' at the nursery, the committee allowed blatant anti-lesbian abuse to go unchallenged. This lack of challenge is in itself anti-lesbian, as is the suggestion that lesbians themselves are responsible for the disgusting press they receive.

Finally we object very strongly to your apparent reference to the dismissals as 'hiccups'. Liz and Janet have not only lost their jobs, they have been the target of vicious attacks in the press and personally, causing them much hardship and distress. Hackney Council is currently negotiating with the present management committee and it is hoped that this will lead to a fairer outcome.

Janet Pearce and Liz Thomas

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